

Wednesday, April 28, 1999

Duxbury Clipper

Who Is It?

Ox-teams drove down the winding lanes when Thomas Prince built a sturdy vessel in 1719. Made of wild cherry wood, it was the first ship built in Duxbury. A new era was beginning....Duxbury today with its old shipmasters' homes is in no small measure a product of those ship-building days which reached their climax more than a century after Thomas Prince built his vessel. The story goes that ship captains built the square colonials, the first mates, the Cape Cods. One of the most imposing square colonials housed one of the most imposing gentlemen of 19th-century Duxbury.

He had his own shipyard, a ten-acre establishment on the Bluefish River opposite his square colonial on Powder Point. He owned a sail-loft and ropewalk, a sparyard and a blacksmith shop. On Commercial Wharf in Boston he had a "counting-room."

He hauled timber from local forests and Maine to build his ships at a time when Duxbury was one of the chief ports in this country. He had packets sailing back and forth to Plymouth and Boston. From 1800 to 1846 his family owned 21 ships. The brig SMYRNA, built in 1825, was the first American vessel to bear the flag of the United States into the Black Sea when it was opened to commerce.

Like his distinguished father, he became the best known of the old time Massachusetts ship-owners. You get some idea of the scope of his operations when you realize he imported salt from Cadiz in his own schooners. He also hauled pine, ash and white oak on his own ox-teams.

"King Caesar II" was once president of the Duxbury Bank.

Answer: Ezra Weston